

THE LAND OF BROKEN PROMISES

BY DANE COOLIDGE.

Two Americans Suddenly Find Themselves About to Re-Enter Mexico.

(Copyright by Frank A. Munsey Co.)

THE slow-rolling winter's sun rose coldly, far to the south, riding up from behind the saw-toothed Sierras of Mexico to throw a silvery halo on Gadsden, the border city.

It was a big city, for the West, and swarming with traffic and men. Its broad main street, lined with brick buildings and throbbing with automobiles, ran from the railroad straight to the south until, at a line, it stopped short and was lost in the desert.

That line which marked the sudden end of growth and progress was the border of the United States; the desert was Mexico. And the difference was not in the land, but in the government.

Gadsden had become a city of men, huge-limbed and powerful and with a queening look in their eyes; a city of adventurers gathered from the ends of the world. A common calamity had driven them from their mines and ranches and glutted the town with men, for the war was on in Mexico and from the farthest corners of Sonora they still came, but from some new scene of murder and pillage, to add their medium to the general discontent.

Into this seething mass of the dispossessed, many of whom had lost a fortune by the war, came two more, with their faces still drawn and red from hard riding through the cold. They stepped forth from the marble entrance of the big hotel and swung off down the street to see the town.

They walked slowly, gazing into the strange faces in the vague hope of finding some friend; and Gadsden, not to be outdone, looked them over curiously and wondered whence they had come.

The bunch of cowboys, still loitering on the corner, glanced scornfully at the smaller man, who sported a pair of puttees—and then at the big man's foot. Finding them unexcused in prospector's shoes they stared dumbly at his wind-burned face and muttered among themselves.

The big man was leading off down a side street, and finally came to a halt.

"Jim's place—it's a lunch-counter," he explained laconically, in answer to his friend's question as to where he was going. "The hotel's all right, and maybe that was a breakfast we got, but I get hungry waiting that way. Gimme a lunch counter, where I can wrap my legs around a stool and watch the cook turn 'em over. Come on—I been there before."

An expression of pitying tolerance came over the little man's face as he listened to this rambling on the quick lunch, but he drew away reluctantly. "Aw, come on, Bud," he pleaded. "Have a little class! What's the use of wanting a stool if you've got to eat at a dog joint? And besides—say, that was a peach of a girl that waited on us this morning! Did you notice her hair? She was a pippin! I left four bits under my plate."

The big man wagged his hand resignedly and started on his way. "All right, pardner," he observed; "that's the deal, she's probably looking for you. I'll meet you in the room."

Left to himself, the big man went on to his lunch counter, where he ordered a steak and a dozen in the milk. Then he ordered a breakfast, to make up for several he had missed, and asked the cook to fry it rare. He was just meditating for a can of peaches that caught his eye when an old man came in and took the stool beside him, picking up the menu with a trembling hand.

"Give me a cup of coffee," he said to the waiter, and he gazed at the bill of fare carefully—"and a roast beef sandwich. No, just the coffee! He corrected, and at that Bud gave him a look. He was a small man, shabbily dressed and with severely whiskers, and his nose was very red. "Here," called Bud, coming to an

instant conclusion, "give 'im his sandwich. I'll pay for it!"

"All right," answered the waiter, whisking up a sandwich from the sideboard, he set it before the old man, who glanced at him in silence. For a fraction of a second he regarded the sandwich apathetically; then, with the aid of his coffee, he made away with it and slipped down off his stool.

"Say," observed the proprietor, as Bud was paying his bill, "do you know who that old timer was?"

"Some old drunk around town," hazarded Bud.

"Well, he's that, too," conceded Sunny Jim, with a smile. "But lemme tell you, pardner, if you had half the rocks that old boy's got you wouldn't need to punch any more cows. That's Henry Kruger, the man that just sold the Cross-Cut Mine for fifty thousand cash, and he's got more besides."

"Huh! he's that, too," the sure don't look it! Say, why didn't you put me wise? Now I've got to hunt him up and apologize."

"That's all right," assured the proprietor; "he won't take any offense. That's just Old Henry—he's kinder queer that way."

"I'll go and see him, anyway," said Bud. "He might think I was butting in."

CHAPTER II.

IT was not difficult to find Henry Kruger in Gadsden. The bar-keepers, those efficient purveyors of information and drinks, knew him as they knew their thumbs, and a casual round of the saloons soon located him in the back room of the Waldorf.

"Say," began Bud, walking bluffy up to him, "the proprietor of that restaurant back there tells me I made a mistake when I insisted on paying for your meal. I just wanted to let you know."

"Oh, that's all right, young man," returned Old Henry, looking up with a humorous smile; "we all of us make our mistakes. I knowed you didn't."

"Give me a cup of coffee," he said to the waiter, and he gazed at the bill of fare carefully—"and a roast beef sandwich. No, just the coffee! He corrected, and at that Bud gave him a look. He was a small man, shabbily dressed and with severely whiskers, and his nose was very red. "Here," called Bud, coming to an

instant conclusion, "give 'im his sandwich. I'll pay for it!"

"All right," answered the waiter, whisking up a sandwich from the sideboard, he set it before the old man, who glanced at him in silence. For a fraction of a second he regarded the sandwich apathetically; then, with the aid of his coffee, he made away with it and slipped down off his stool.

"Say," observed the proprietor, as Bud was paying his bill, "do you know who that old timer was?"

"Some old drunk around town," hazarded Bud.

"Well, he's that, too," conceded Sunny Jim, with a smile. "But lemme tell you, pardner, if you had half the rocks that old boy's got you wouldn't need to punch any more cows. That's Henry Kruger, the man that just sold the Cross-Cut Mine for fifty thousand cash, and he's got more besides."

"Huh! he's that, too," the sure don't look it! Say, why didn't you put me wise? Now I've got to hunt him up and apologize."

"That's all right," assured the proprietor; "he won't take any offense. That's just Old Henry—he's kinder queer that way."

"I'll go and see him, anyway," said Bud. "He might think I was butting in."

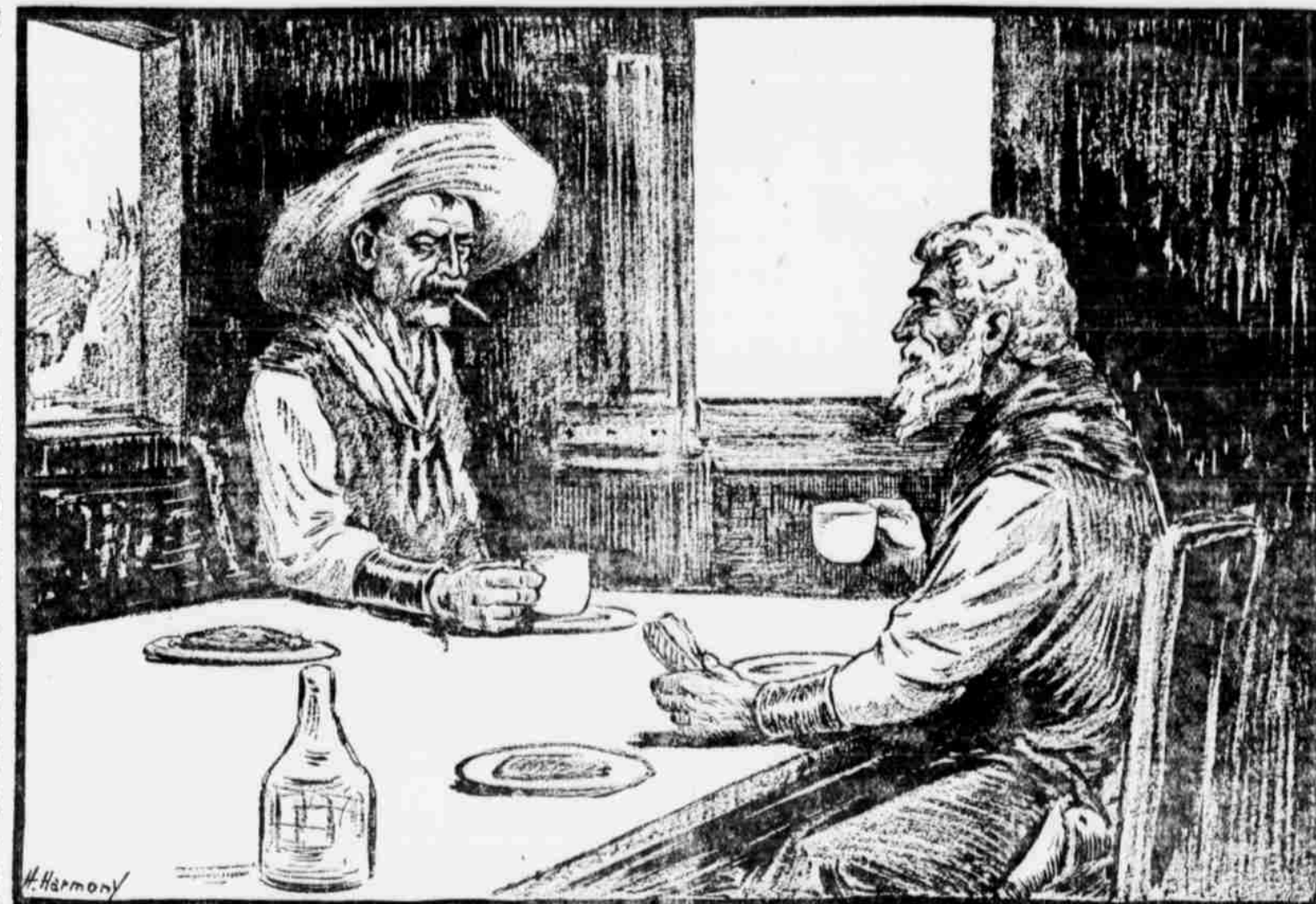
Left to himself, the big man went on to his lunch counter, where he ordered a steak and a dozen in the milk. Then he ordered a breakfast, to make up for several he had missed, and asked the cook to fry it rare. He was just meditating for a can of peaches that caught his eye when an old man came in and took the stool beside him, picking up the menu with a trembling hand.

"Give me a cup of coffee," he said to the waiter, and he gazed at the bill of fare carefully—"and a roast beef sandwich. No, just the coffee! He corrected, and at that Bud gave him a look. He was a small man, shabbily dressed and with severely whiskers, and his nose was very red. "Here," called Bud, coming to an

instant conclusion, "give 'im his sandwich. I'll pay for it!"

"All right," answered the waiter, whisking up a sandwich from the sideboard, he set it before the old man, who glanced at him in silence. For a fraction of a second he regarded the sandwich apathetically; then, with the aid of his coffee, he made away with it and slipped down off his stool.

"Say," observed the proprietor, as Bud was paying his bill, "do you know who that old timer was?"



"MAYBE WE CAN MAKE SOME KIND OF A DICKER. WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN THESE PARTS?"

line, and we don't hardly know what we do want yet."

"Um-m," grunted Kruger, tugging at his beard, but he did not come out with his proposal.

"I tell you," he said at last, "I'm not doing much talking about this proposition of mine. It's a big thing, and somebody might beat me to it. You know who I am, I guess. I've pulled off some of the biggest deals in this country for a poor man, and I don't make many mistakes—not about minerals, anyway. And when I tell you that this is rich—you're talking with a man that knows."

He fixed his shrewd, blue eyes on the young man's open countenance and waited for him to speak.

"That's right," he continued, as Bud finally nodded noncommittally. "She's sure rich. I've had an eye on this proposition for years—just waiting for the right time to come. And now it's come! All I need is the man, it ain't a dangerous undertaking—because I don't think it is—but I got to have somebody I can trust. I'm willing to pay you good wages, or I'll let you in on the deal—but you'll have to go down into Mexico."

"Nothin' doing!" responded Bud with instant decision. "If it's in Arizona I'll talk to you, but no more Mexico for me. I've got something pretty good down there myself, as far as that goes."

"What's the matter?" inquired Kruger, set back by the abrupt refusal; "scared?"

"Nope," pronounced Bud, rising ponderously to his feet; "if it was this side the line I'd stay with you till the hair slipped, on anything, but—"

"Well, let's talk it over again some time," urged Kruger, following him along out. "It ain't often I get took with a young feller the way I was with you, and I believe we can make it yet. Where are you staying in town?"

"Up at the Coehise," said Bud. "Come on with me—I told my pardner I'd meet him there."

They were sitting together in a friendly silence when Phil came out.

of the dining room, but as he drew near the old man nodded to Bud and went over to speak to the clerk.

"Who was that old-timer you were talking to?" inquired Phil, as he sank down in the vacant chair.

"Looks like the morning-after with him, don't it?"

"Yes," grunted Bud; "reckon it is. Name's Kruger."

"What—the mining man?"

"That's right," exclaimed Phil, "what in the world was he talking to you about?"

"Oh, some kind of a mining deal," grumbled Bud. "Wanted me to go down into Mexico."

"What'd you tell him?" challenged the little man, sitting up suddenly in his chair.

"Say, that old boy's got rocks!"

"He can keep 'em for all of me," observed Bud comfortably. "You know what I think about Mexico?"

"Sure; but what was his proposition? What did he want you to do?"

"Search me! He was mighty mysterious about it. Said he wanted a man he could trust."

"Well, holy Moses, Bud!" cried Phil, "wake up! Didn't you get his proposition?"

"No, he wasn't talking about it. Said it was a good thing and he'd pay me well, or let me in on the deal; but when he hollered Mexico I quit. I've got plenty."

"Yes, but—" the little man choked and could say no more. "Well, you're one Jim dandy business man, Bud! Hooker!" he burst out at last.

"You'd be—"

"Well, what's the matter?" demanded Hooker defiantly. "Do you want to go back into Mexico? Nor me, either! What you kicking about?"

"You might have led him on and got the scheme, anyway. Maybe there's a million in it. Come on, let's go over and talk to him. I'd take a chance, if it was good enough."

"Aw, don't be a fool, Phil," urged the cowboy plaintively. "We've got no call to hear his scheme unless we want to go in on it. Leave him alone and he'll do something for us on this side. Oh, cripes, what's the matter with you? He's carefully

He heaved himself reluctantly up out of his chair and moved over to where Kruger was sitting.

"Mr. Kruger," he said, as the old man turned to meet him, "I'll make you acquainted with Mr. De Lancey, my pardner. My name's Hooker."

"How do, Mr. De Lancey," responded Kruger, shaking him by the hand. "How do, Mr. De Lancey."

He gave Phil a rather crusty nod as he spoke, but De Lancey was dragging up another chair and failed to notice.

"Mr. Hooker was telling me about some proposition you had, to go down into Mexico," he began, drawing up closer while the old man watched him from under his eyebrows. "That's one tough country to do business in right now, but at the same time."

"The country's perfectly quiet," put in Kruger—"perfectly quiet."

"Well, maybe so," qualified De Lancey, "but when it comes to getting a lot of trouble in the world, it's the old man crabbily. Not a bit."

"Not a bit of trouble in the world," said the old man crabbily. "Not a bit."

"Well, then," snapped Kruger, "meet me at the Waldorf in an hour!"

(To Be Continued.)

The Day of Rest

By Maurice Ketten



Original Fashion Designs For The Evening World's Home Dressmakers

By Mildred Lodewick

Copyright, 1919, by The Press Publishing Co. (The New York Evening World.)

An Elegant Hand-Made Blouse.

